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Her relatives, leaping to their horses, rode after the cavalcade insisting that the bride return and take shelter. The groom's kinsmen angrily refused to halt, pointing out that if a bride retraces her steps or even looks round upon the house she has left, it brings ill luck upon her new home. Refusing to be drawn into further argument, they rode on. The enraged kinsmen of the bride dismounted, and blaspheming against the sisters and mothers of their future affines, sent them away to a fusillade of rifle shots over their heads and stones aimed at their bodies.

However, the separate celebration of the wedding feast, each family in its own home, the denial of commensality, and the mutual display of antagonism institutionalized in wedding custom, are the last occasions on which the two families are permitted to bear witness openly to the aspect of mutual opposition in their relationship. Before the eldest brother of the bridegroom leaves the bride's house, he is offered a glass of ouzo by the bride's father or brother who says, 'We shall wait for you'. This refers to the customary visit or 'return' (ἐπιστροφή), which is made by the bride and groom and the latter's close relatives to the former home of the bride, generally on the second Sunday after the wedding. Meat is killed, quantities of wine are bought, and there is feasting and dancing through the night.

The 'return' is an important occasion. By this time, the new marriage relationship has been established both by the secular contract of betrothal between the two families and by the joining of the two individuals in the religious sacrament of marriage. In the first words of the service which refer to the bride and groom, the priest says, 'Let us pray to the Lord for his servants (X., Y.) who are now joining the one with the other for the common life of marriage.' The two individuals are now a social unity, a man-and-wife (ἀνδρόγυνο). It is not possible to help the one and not help the other, or withdraw support from one without withdrawing support from the other. Thus, the behaviour of both families at the 'return is necessarily oriented towards co-operation and forced goodwill.

At first conversation between the two families is stilted and formal, and restricted to neutral topics such as weather and taxes. The bride and groom, under the eyes of their respective affines, sit silent and constrained. But as the evening wears on,

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However, if two or three girls are born in succession, he may be asked to waive his right before the birth of the next child in case he is bringing bad luck by having an 'unlucky hand' (κακοριζικο χέρι).

A man may sometimes ask a father if he can baptize his child, and it is agreed that ideally this is the correct procedure. However, since the prospective godfather is more often a person of higher social status or prestige, it is generally the father of the child who takes the initiative in establishing the relationship. It is not easy for a person to refuse to 'baptize' a child, but a man who is forced somewhat unwillingly into the relationship does not generally become a useful or co-operative spiritual kinsman. Yet the advantages of the relationship do not all lie on the one side. A man who has 'baptized' many children has many clients who are in some measure morally bound to support him whether with votes, commercial custom, or in some other way. A man with many dependants wins prestige amongst his equals. And to stand as godfather is in itself a good thing, an action pleasing to God.

Considerably more than half the spiritual kinship relations of the Sarakatsani are with persons outside the community. The occupations of these persons are various. They include cheese merchants, animal dealers, village Presidents, members of village councils, village shopkeepers, other prominent villagers with influence, transport lorry owners, veterinary experts, lawyers, Members of Parliament, grammar school teachers, tailors, and others. They have one quality in common that they all are able in different ways to help or hinder the families who wish to establish a link of spiritual kinship with them.

Spiritual kinship is not the only means of introducing an element of moral commitment into a relationship with a person outside the community, but it is the most effective. The ritual sanction 'locks' the relationship. An accusation of ingratitude may easily break well established relations of friendship of the kind that are based on the exchange of complementary favours, but it cannot destroy a connexion of spiritual kinship, nor is it a justification for retaliation against the other partner whatever the provocation. Although there are godparents who do not alter their course of conduct after entering the relationship, this is rare. Public opinion and a man's religious and social conscience put some restraint on him. Naturally, merchants and

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between brothers; wanton cruelty to, or neglect of, the family's horses, sheep or goats. 783

The third category of sins are those which exist in the field of general morality in the behaviour of one man towards another. A man feels little obligation to discipline himself in his conduct towards an unrelated person, but there are limits which ought not to be transgressed, and generally speaking these limits are related to the consequences that immoderate behaviour would have for the victim's family. To exploit a very poor man, or refuse charity to a beggar, is sinful. To slander the name of an unmarried girl is a sin. In these instances there enters a hint of the idea of *hubris*, an arrogance of act, or thought, overstepping bounds set by God and involving wrongdoing to others which threatens the moral or physical existence of a family and is not excusable on grounds of self-interest. 783 609

The essence of sin is that, in one form or another, it is wilful rebellion against God and His institutions. And for such an act of personal sin a man may expect to be punished by God through sickness, death, or some catastrophe that leads his family into want. Catastrophe or misfortune is by no means always explained as the punishment of God, but where a man is guilty of a known sin, any misfortune which befalls him, or another member of his immediate family, will certainly be recognized as divine punishment. As I have already suggested, Sarakatsani are skilled in listing the sins of others. The sufferer and his kin, on the other hand, will more often ascribe their ill luck not to God's wrath, but to the evil eye, a manifestation of other men's sinful and envious natures. 783 784 [754] [777]

It must be stressed that the Sarakatsani visualize the punishment of God as being realized essentially in this world either against themselves, or their children. Hell is a place of vaporous darkness where sinful men suffer in cauldrons of pitch; Paradise is a plain of well-watered grass covered with spring flowers. These conceptions exist, yet seem to make little impression. If an evil man dies unscathed, men are not content with thoughts of the torments he may suffer in Hell; they concentrate their attention on the misfortunes which will certainly overtake his children in this world. The wages of sin is death. But it is not the spiritual death which follows physical death which 783 784 772 775 783 784 771

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which does not necessarily compromise the nobility of his soul. 783

Nevertheless these are sins which separate man from God. 828 If they provoke no sense of personal guilt, a man feels a heaviness, a depression of his spirit, when he thinks of his need to be near God, and of this inherited condition of sinfulness. In the previous chapter I mentioned how the Sarakatsani think of the years of youth as the time of moral excellence. Later come responsibilities and the need for cunning, deceit, and lies. There is grudging admiration for the expertise of the shrewd leader but regret that the means to success must be these. 'If only we had trust in one another', is the most common Sarakatsan expression of utopian values. In the face of the many external threats to their way of life they are profoundly conscious of their own disunion. They sense, also, the distance between the heroic quality of their ideals and the often petty quarrels, or hypocritical posturings, of everyday living. But, they say, there is nothing the individual can do to alter the corrupt forms and conditions of life in this world. In this situation sin, for which they are not responsible, separates the Sarakatsani from God. It requires the grace of God, conferred through the sacraments of Baptism and the Eucharist, to make communion possible. Inevitably if a child dies unbaptized, innocent of the world but still implicated in the appalling consequences of original sin, its soul is lost. The baptized Sarakatsanos is free of the original guilt, yet participation in the world of sin again separates him from God and he requires, therefore, the periodical renewal of his state of grace which the Eucharist effects. The related elements in Sarakatsan religious life, then, are simply these: the nobility of the Sarakatsani, ancestral sin in the forms of sensuality and envy for which they are not individually responsible, the consequences of this condition of sin which separates them from God, the sacraments which reunite them to Him.

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Ideas about fate are related to these notions of sin. The Sarakatsani, in common with most Greek villagers, believe that on the third night after the birth of a child, the three Fates (Μοῖρες), in the form of three old women, visit the infant's cradle and write the child's fate. What they decree is unalterable. In a number of folk stories the mother overhears the words of the Fates and attempts to prevent some stroke of

777 776 [971]

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ill fortune, generally an early death in predicted circumstances. Her precautions, however, are inevitably unsuccessful.

If the Sarakatsani are pressed to give the provenance and authority of these Fates, they reply that ultimately all things are written by God. But it would be incorrect to suggest that the Greek villager or shepherd faces all the events of his life in terms of a simple determinism. They do not think that the Fates arrange every detail of an individual's life. Length of life and amounts of good and ill fortune provide an external framework within which man must still struggle to avoid dishonour. These external circumstances tell nothing of the individual's moral worth; nor within the general limits set by his fate is a man prevented from seeking the help and protection of God. In practice, of course, the individual does not know what the Fates have decided for him. But the knowledge that something has, indeed, been decided encourages him to face dangers with manliness and honour, since no bullet or knife can reach its mark before the appointed hour of death.

When a man suffers misfortune, although different people may variously refer it to God's punishment or the evil eye, all will agree that it was 'written from God' (γραμμένο ἀπὸ τὸν Θεό). Similarly, in commenting on differences of fortune they will say, 'God wills it thus, some are higher, some are lower'. In Sarakatsan thought, existence in a world of external necessity is inevitably involved with ancestral sin. The multiplicity of contrary wills, the division of the sexes, the limitations of time, space, and physical resources lead to acts which are sinful. These conditions imply that the material circumstances of men must be different. Instead of being united in their respect for God, men are divided by their different personal circumstances and their self-interested struggle to improve them. Thus although Sarakatsani would not systematize their thoughts in this way, there is implied a link between ancestral sin and fate. The notion that particular events in life, and the circumstances of an individual's social position are 'written from God' indicates not so much God's detailed pre-arrangement of each individual's life, as His prevision of what will happen to each of His created beings caught up in the contingencies of sin and fate and yet still exercising in the struggle a measure of free will.

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We have already seen that the Sarakatsan notion of ancestral sin releases the individual from any considerable personal sense of guilt. The idea of fate is used, but with less success, to release a man from the shame that accompanies certain kinds of failure. In the struggle for social prestige men must have self-regard and supreme confidence in themselves. They must believe that in any situation they will be omnicompetent to meet and defeat their rivals. The one fear of failure is the intervention of the external event, the disease which decimates the flock, the sterility of a wife. In almost every prayer, however short, a Sarakatsanos prays for 'good luck'. And when misfortune strikes, a man's helplessness before 'what has been written' is used to soften the sense of failure both in the presentation of events to outsiders and to himself. The element of external necessity, the restriction of absolute free will, and therefore the idea of fate, were introduced into the world through ancestral sin. By his claim that this kind of sin, or failure, is exterior to his individual will the Sarakatsan attempts to defend and assert his nobility and strength.

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2. THE DEVIL

Over against God stands the Devil, the agent and first cause of evil. Most Sarakatsani are aware of his angelic origin and his rebellion against God, the consequence of which was expulsion from Heaven. Evil, they think, entered the universe through the contrary will of the Devil, and particularly in the form of envy. When God flings a thunderbolt to earth it passes 40 fathoms into the earth. After 40 days it reappears on the surface. It lies there for a moment, a splendour of gold, only to be claimed at once by the Devil who in his envy and fury urinates on the sacred weapon, turning it black and useless. The sin of the Devil was anterior to that of Adam: already in the form of the tempting serpent he led the first man to his Fall. He knows that he cannot dethrone God, but in his envy he attempts to destroy creation from within by turning human freedom towards evil. His work is always to turn away human souls from their natural path to God. The created world is not evil but the Devil has corrupted it with the infection of his evil. 'The Devil has the earth, God the Heavens', the shepherds often say.

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/254 cont./

In the case of our herders this syncretism takes concrete form in practices such as the fumigation of the placenta with incense so that evil spirits will not attack it (Judeo-Christian belief), or the period of forty days during which the head of the viper must remain in a church before being worn as an amulet, that is to say, during the period necessary for the celebration of forty services.

That is not all. Originally present in the rites that we have enumerated, the Mother-Goddess has become "deprived of all that made her unique" in the past; she is "de-individualized," according to the apt expression of R. Bastide, to become a force symbolized in acts and operating as such on other forces. (20)

20. See R. Bastide: Ibid., p. 18, where the author, in connection with Greco-Roman magic, treats the question of the de-individualization of gods by magic. Farther on, on p. 296, will be found supplementary observations on this evolution.

Thus, by way of conclusion, /let us say that/ in order to promote fertility, the Sarakatsani appeal to forces related to the belief in the Mother-Goddess. But the presence of the latter in the corresponding ritual is only discernible if one goes back to very remote times, for some of these avatars survive in the symbolism of various practices and the effectiveness of the latter derives from them; over time, some of these practices have taken on a Christian coloring.

In the pages that follow we shall again find these same ideas incorporated in other facets of Sarakatsani magic. For the moment we have yet to describe the practices which promote fertility indirectly.

There are, first of all, some observances concerning the day of conception. If the festivities of the wedding (which sometimes last several days) end on Monday evening, the women of the family keep the bride close by so that her husband will not touch her, since this night forms part of

842 /254 cont./
777 Tuesday--a day considered unlucky. Marital relations likewise, are
[585] forbidden on Saturday /255/ and Sunday. (21) Children conceived on
[833] 21. It is very difficult to explain these prohibitions.
[171] According to a belief very widespread in Greece, Tuesday is an unlucky day because Constantinople fell into the hands of the Turks on a Tuesday. Yet it is certain that it was already considered unlucky before the fall of the Empire.

[171] vol. I, p. 42.--As for Saturday, it should be said that in many regions of Greece it is considered the day most favorable for magic. In others the prohibition of sexual relations is due to the fact that Saturday and Sunday are days meant for religious duties, and therefore he should refrain from unchastity.

these days are supposed to be burdened with defects. On the other hand, those who are conceived on a Monday are gifted with health and exceptional intelligence.

843 When a child is conceived, the mother-to-be must protect herself
789 against a miscarriage. To this end two methods are prescribed. The first
[824] consists of making an amulet: flowers of the willow are placed in a small bag which the woman wears. The second is more complicated: three women, all called "Mary" (the name of the Holy Virgin, mother of God) make a rope composed of three strands of wool previously fashioned by each of them. Having finished the rope, they make several knots in it and place it around the waist of the mother-to-be. (22)

22. Cited by Madame Hadjimichali: Ibid., A.I. p.

The symbolic efficacy of these methods is in the use of the willow and the rope as "bonds," (23) therefore also capable of binding together the mother

[342] 23. It will be recalled that the parts of the hut
[824] frame are tied with willow. On the magic of the "knots" see M. Eliade: Images et Symboles, p. 145.

/257 cont./

233 825 789 [171] [842]

29. It is known that in several countries, including Greece, the maypole is burned--a reminiscence of the ritual of the Hilaria festival in Rome, in honor of Attis (a complete description of which is found in E.O. James: Ibid., pp. 205-208), which promotes universal fertility,--M. Eliade: Ibid., p. 264.

233 825 789 262 531 [171]

(underworld forces) is known to us. Even here these entities exert an influence favorable to abundance (30) by /258/ effecting the economic

30. A very fine study of St. Basil's pastry (Greek homologue of the cake of kings prepared in France) and hance of all the ceremonial pastry and bread of Christmas, New Year's day, marriage, etc., in Greece has just been published by the Greek ethnologist D. Doukatos: 'Η Βασιλόπιτα. A detailed analysis of this custom, accompanied /258/ by commentaries on its significance in promoting well-being, abundance, prosperity, etc., as well as on its origins, and a study comparing it with similar customs of the West clarifies this problem. From the copious bibliography we single out two works: Margaret Hasluck: The Basil-Cake of the Greek New Year /cited in English/, pp. 143-177, and G. Bidault de l'Isle: Vieux dictons de nos compagnes, p. 43-44.

mechanism (the decoration of the pastry and the combination if its motifs constituting an indisputable illustration). We must take into account the fact that the magic practices in general fulfill a multiplicity of functions. But two things must still be noted: First, the Sarakatsani, like all Greeks, attach a special importance to the first person who crosses the threshold of the house on New Year's day, for if the person brings luck, the year will be favorable; if he brings ill luck, the year will be disastrous. (31)

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[171]

31. This belief, very widespread in Greece, already existed in antiquity; and even

233 825 789 [777] [527] [175] /258 cont./

in Byzantium: Ἰωάννου ΧΡΥΣΟΣΤΟΜΟΥ: p. 106.--

This is the unlucky person.

Thus, an old Sarakatsani woman told us that one year her husband, inadvertantly, was the first person to enter the hut. That year their sheep gave them only rams.

The second observation has to do with the position on the ground of the young girl who visits the huts. It is a symbolic means of influencing the ewes and compelling them not to chase off their young when the latter try to nurse just after their birth, as they very often do, thus endangering the lives of the newborn animals.

233 731 821 789 [221] [776] Fertility, Abundance and Prosperity.

The problem of feeding the livestock is only partially solved by the seasonal migrations in search of grass. A drought is enough to destroy everything. To avert such a possibility the Sarakatsani addresses himself again to the universal creative forces personified in other avatars of the Mother-Goddess capable of promoting the fertiltiy of the earth and the abundance of vegetation.

776 These avatars are connected with the evolution of ideas about the Mother-Goddess during antiquity in the direction of an acceptance of the existance of a male principle at her side. This principle progressed from being her son, then her companion, first in a fraternal sense then in a sexual one, finally securing supremacy for himself. Generally this figure dies young only to be resurrected later, full of strength /259/ and vitality; it symbolizes nature, which dies in winter and is regenerated in the spring, and to nature it transmits its forces. (32)

776 171 32. The Mother-Goddess becomes Rea, the mother of the Cretan Zeus who is not yet "the father of men and of gods" of the Homeric epoch, but a god of fertility who dies periodically: P.M. Schuhl: Ibid., p. 95, J. Przyluski: Ibid., p. 179, H. Jeanmarie: Couroi et Courètes. She generally becomes Cybele of Phrygia, assisted by Attis; her worship and the passion of

789 /263 cont./
585 the tree of immortality is the vine: M. Eliade: Ibid.,
[191] pp. 247 and 248, "the vine, the plant expression of immortality--just as the vine in archaic traditions has remained the symbol of youth and eternal life."
[213] [182] [823] say that this libation gives rise to "health, abundance and good fortune." Sometimes the bride also pours out water, in order to be always "fresh as water."

789 825 However, abundance is further sustained by the snake for the polyvalent symbolism of the latter promotes abundance. Though explicit testimonies are lacking, the facts speak for themselves. It will be recalled that the Sarakatsani have extensive woodcrafts. On all the wooden 789 825 objects they make are found various decorative motifs, mostly geometric and generally beautiful. Looking at them closely one immediately realizes 322 531 that the snake, or rather the viper, appears only on the staffs of the 233 283 shepherds or on the distaffs (fig. 104).A It is certain that the handle of the staff, in the shape of a definite and marked curvature, in itself suggests the movement of a snake. But the shape of the distaff calls to mind nothing similar. Moreover, nothing explains the absence of this motif on other objects. Now, it is obvious that the presence of the animal on the staff and the distaff is symbolic much more than it is ornamental. The snake accompanies these objects because they represent the two principal economic activities of the Sarakatsani, herding and wool crafts. If it is agreed that the chthonian forces favor fecundity and fertility, hence abundance, the viper will augment the yield from these two fundamental activities.

777 To complete our discussion of this subject we must still mention the Sarakatsani observances bearing on the propitious days for the performance 777 236 of certain tasks. Thus, the shearing must never begin on Tuesday. On the other hand, it is altogether advisable to start the shearing on Maundy Thursday by symbolically removing a little wool from a sheep. Maundy

A, A /See p. 429--Analyst/

/263 cont./

777 236 Thursday is moreover considered /264/ as a propitious day for a certain number of practices that will be dealt with in the chapter devoted to religion. (39)

39. Carsten Höeg, in the work cited, says about shearing (p. 14-15): "I have sought with much interest to discover whether this act...gave rise to ceremonies or demanded precautions, giving evidence of more of less conscious superstitious ideas. But I have seen absolutely nothing that could be interpreted in this sense." This admission of the Danish ethnographer, surprising though it is, shows the difficulties that the explorer of Sarakatsani life must overcome at every turn.

[574] 777 22 Moreover, during the shearing, it is necessary to avoid the visit of any person who brings ill luck. (40) As for the seasonal migration, it must

40. On the influence of a visitor on destiny see pp. 289-290, footnote 31.

not begin on Tuesday, Friday or Sunday. (41)

41. See above, the notes on the days indicated for conception and the comments about them, pp. 283-285.

The Well-Being of Men and of Animals

784 776 751 [789] All the magic procedures examined thus far certainly contribute to the well-being of men and animals. However, men and animals are exposed to threats from different sources: supernatural beings, illnesses, malevolent human acts and influences (evil eye, black magic)--so many sub-topics which will be set forth in this section.

* * * *

776 The realm of feared spirits is filled with demons, fairies, moires, and finally ogres. Each of these has its characteristics and exerts a particular influence which determines the specific manner in which one should defend oneself against its activity.

Demons belong to several categories. Certain ones, of whom the

/269 cont./
776 [789] men comes from the Church. We shall speak of it in connection with religion.

As in the case of the demons, one also distinguishes several categories of fairies. There are fairies dressed in white and others dressed in black. The former also wear multicolored clothing "like the gypsies," the Sarakatsani say. All are dangerous. The first can metamorphose man into anything and even carry him off if they are able to steal from him an object that belongs to him. On the other hand, if the man happens to appropriate one of their personal objects he becomes their master. People even tell of a man "who, having stolen a fairy's [588] kerchief subdued her and finally married her." The second /type of [191] fairies/ have the habit of calling to a passerby and anyone who is rash [153] enough to answer becomes voiceless. They can also strike him with in- [734] curable illnesses, make him insane, disabled or infirm for life. The first type frequent springs and streams. One can hear from afar, especially after twilight, their voices and their laughter. For they love lively conversation and jokes and they give themselves up to it while spinning. Very often their presence is announced by the sound of violins. It sometimes happens that a Sarakatsani, passing these places the next day finds on the ground the weight from a spindle left there by the supernatural spinners. (57)

57. The Sarakatsani of "Plaka" (Pélasghia) showed us a "fairy weight" on which we shall comment farther on.

The black fairies haunt gorges and wooded ravines and the depths of the [789] mountains. Avoidance of these places, of sleeping near springs, and above all carrying incense and salt always on oneself are the common methods of [263] protection of the Sarakatsani. They explain that salt, a heavy substance, makes a man heavy and thus the fairies cannot take him away.

776 777 The moires, fairies of fate who are three in number, come down close to the newborn child three nights after its birth and determine its destiny

3: Kabbadias--305A E-4,5 (no date) 1965 EH14 Sarakatsani EH14

/269 cont./

in a way that is inescapable. (58) The young Sarakatsani mother /270/

58. A belief that goes back to the farthest Hellenic antiquity. The moires spin one's destiny, Oddyssey, VI, 191, etc. Propitiatory offerings to the moires are generally carried out by the Greeks. See D. Loukatos: Ibid., p. 8, who also cites the works of

Ν. ΠΟΛΙΤΗΣ : Παραδόσεις Α', p. 888, et Λαογραφικά Σύμμεικτα, p. 56-57.

/270 cont./

776 must then dipose them favorably toward her child. In order to do this
777 she places near it a cup full of sweets and honey, offering it at one
[782] and the same time to the fairies and so that "fate in store for it may be sweet"-- a procedure with a double efficacy. According to the report
[787] of Madame Hadjimichali, the Sarakatsani the next day look for a black dot on the nose of the child; its position reveals the verdict of the moires. Placed near the forehead, it foretells a happy fate; near the base of the nose it is a sign of ill fortune. (59)

59. Ibid., D.I., p.[illegible]

776 The last category of supernatural beings which threaten men are the
[538] ogres, fabulous personages, heroes of numerous tales especially meant for children and told in front of the fire during the long winter evenings. (60)

60. Carsten Höeg: Ibid., A. p. 50 f., presents a regular collection of stories of ogres.

We shall not dwell further on these legends which require literary analysis.

751 The magic rites that protect against illness aim more at prevention
789 than cure. By enriching the body's potential one avoids "evils." The
[753] idea that the Sarakatsani form about the latter is rather confusing, supernatural attack and disease or physiological disorder being very often identified in their thinking. Hence magical intervention must be exerted in connection with particular circumstances in the lives of men and animals--circumstances of "transition" according to the current terminology--without detriment to other interventions on various occasions.

844 The moment the child comes into the world its lips are smeared with
751 some drops of blood from the woman who has borne it. If it is born with
787 a caul, the membrane that covers its face is carefully removed by being
822 drawn toward the chin and not toward the forehead, in order to avoid
845 strabismus. The membrane then serves as an amulet. In order to stop the
[758] bleeding of the umbilical cord they put on the bleeding end the ashes of a burned bit of the father's cloak.

/280 cont./

787
825 snake had resuscitated another snake. Let us recall in this connection the sign of Aesculapius and the sacred snakes the medical center of Epidaurus.

It is therefore in the best position to neutralize occult acts and their
(155) harmful influence. It removes all ills, /281/ evil spirits, sicknesses, the evil eye. That is why we find it not only on men but also on the ram, the billy-goat or the sick (animals and people). It is considered "sacred" and has its place among the icons. Its properties emanate from its very nature, but also from various conditions. Not any viper at all
825 can be transformed into an amulet. First it must be caught on the first
787 of May. On this day men and women spread out over the countryside to
789 hunt vipers. Armed with a stick that ends in a fork, they immobilize the animal and cut off its head. In Greek the word "magic" and the word "May" sound almost the same. Hence in several regions of the country the first of May is considered the most propitious day for magic. (88)

88. This is the explanation of G. Megas: [illegible] p. 139. According to the Dictionnaire des antiquités grecques et romaines /Dictionary of Greek and Roman antiquity/ of Darenberg and Saglio, the word MAIA, the goddess maia "personified the bringing forth of living things and above all the development of plant life. The name of the month of May, Maius, has the same meaning and comes directly from the same root, but the Romans who celebrated the festival of Maia in May were inclined to believe that the goddess had given her name to the month... They linked Maia to the Good Goddess, Bona Dea, that is, to fecundity."

825 Furthermore, it must not be forgotten that it is bound up with the
842 regeneration of nature, the fertility of the earth and the festivals and
789 rites which relate to it. The snake is thus eminently suited to be taken as a symbol against magic and in favor of fertility--an adaptation which in